

opinion, make for a more balanced definition of electoral boundaries.

So, if you apply to the five electoral districts in Eastern Quebec the rules contained in the bill as it stands, you inevitably end up with a higher rate of depopulation and conditions unfavourable to building a new rurality. This situation is not unique to us. Every region in Canada is similarly affected, and I think the government should really be responsive to this.

In conclusion, after following this bill as it went through several stages, I think that it should be defeated because the government did not fulfil the mandate it should have given itself, that is to ensure that all citizens of this country are adequately represented on the electoral map and that this map will promote a more participating democracy.

One more thing, and I will conclude on this. I think it is very important to make sure that the cost of our democratic mechanisms are well within reasonable limits and that this is probably the least expensive system allowing us to achieve interesting results. Under the present circumstances, the government could have come up with a better mechanism and I think that it would have gained from listening to representations in that regard.

I hope that the people of Quebec will be able to clearly see that, in that regard, the Bloc fully carried out its mandate to protect the interests of Quebecers and respect the choice they will make in the referendum. Either way, they will have been represented in this place by members who will have done their utmost to ensure adequate representation.

As we examine electoral boundaries, we also notice duplication in the representation provided by members of Parliament. In the day-to-day work of members, there is clearly duplication resulting in additional costs to the government. There is also, in a way, unhealthy competition between provincial and federal members of Parliament, which does not promote efficiency in the system. I think this is one of the main reasons why a majority, the vast majority of Quebecers condemn the federal system in its present form and have been trying for 30 years to change it and make it better, but the actions taken in recent years have shown that this is impossible and that the only way to get things moving again is to vote "yes" in the referendum to make sure they are in control of their future.

[English]

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the comments of my hon. colleague across the way.

"Slamming the door in our face" I think was the terminology he used for not immediately agreeing to providing 25 per cent of the seats in this House for the province of Quebec. I suppose many Quebecers, and indeed many other Canadians, consider

that the separatists from Quebec who propose separating from Canada are slamming the door in other Canadians' faces.

We are adults and should resolve our problems as individuals and as a country through serious discussion, through caring and sharing our thoughts and ideas with all areas of this great country. It would certainly be childish to suggest that one needs four or five strikes and then, like children, take the ball and bat and go home.

• (1650)

In this particular case, my hon. colleague across the way noted some of the concerns he and perhaps others have had. We could sit down and cite, back and forth, historic concerns probably for several days and weeks. However, we have to take a point from where we are today and move forward. We cannot move forward and accomplish our goals when we have such things as a referendum and separatists and separation hanging over our heads. What we really need is an opportunity to sit down and, with serious discussion, negotiate where this country is going in the future.

I compliment my hon. colleague across the way for even suggesting that. The fact that they are talking about whatever percentage of seats in this House indicates to me that indeed deep down they are looking to stay in Canada and to stay in this House of Commons.

[Translation]

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member heard that I chose to stay here. I think that it is quite obvious from our approach and our desire to stay until the end of our mandate. I think that it is quite obvious given the number of times we showed that we favoured sovereignty and that we want Quebecers to make that choice in a democratic fashion.

However, on the issue of the bill before the House, it is interesting to note that it is not the official opposition in Ottawa that asked for the 25 per cent. The Leader of the Opposition in the Quebec National Assembly, who is the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party, proposed that the Quebec National Assembly reiterate its objective of keeping at least 25 per cent of the seats in the Canadian House of Commons for Quebec and call on the Quebec government to make representations to that effect.

This reminds me a little of the type of consensus we see on the issue of jurisdiction over manpower. It is the kind of unanimous opposition we in Quebec can summon against this. It is the Liberal majority in this place that voted against giving Quebec 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons. It is the kind of results we will keep in mind.

The official opposition in Quebec agrees with the official opposition in the House of Commons in this regard. The Quebec government wants to assume that responsibility, to ensure that minimum level of protection. I think that there is a consensus the Liberal majority must face.